



In Captivity



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Chapter 1 by Story Wars

The zoologist watched expectantly as the subject gave another fruitless shove of her hips. It had been four hours since the birth had begun, and it seemed like they were no closer to delivery.

"Joan," he muttered, taking a sip of coffee and looking away from the exhibit for the first time in an hour, "status report?"

The woman to his right bit her lip. "She's stressed, sir. I think they usually give birth in the presence of their mate in the wild."

"Well, it's not my fault that damned reporter convinced the state that our male was dangerous." Clearly, it was a sore topic. Joan hesitated.

"I know, sir."

"And the same people who called for his euthanization are going to retweet and repost pictures of his kit just because it's /cute./"

"Sir? Let's just focus on the delivery, okay?"

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"Fine, fine, you're right. You're always right."

He turned back to the cage. The kit's heads, at the least, were visible. He just hoped that it was alive.

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Twelve years, and Charles Carlton had been working up to this moment. The first Chimera born in captivity. Part dragon, part ram, part lion, part snake. An insanely complex creature that might just bring a little new blood to their zoo. At least, he hoped so.

Chapter 2 by Sarah Moore



With a final heave, the first Chimera was born. It was alive, but barely. He rushed into the cage with a respirator and got the kit into a stable condition.

A few weeks later, Charles discovered he was right. The same people that had called for the killing of the kit's father, are posting pictures of the little kit and calling it cute. Sure he was cute, he had shining eyes and a little snake for a tail, but he would turn out the same as his father. Then the public would call for his killing. We called him Genocide. The Chimeras in the wild were going extinct. And every time someone wanted one of these beautiful creatures dead, or even just a two animal hybrid dead, it was a big blow to that species. I just hoped that he would be able to live past me.

Be strong, Genocide, be strong.

Chapter 3 by WaffleWarrior



The whole world spun and I was lifted in the air. My other heads bouncing off mine, fighting for the front. I mewed as warm fingers ran over me and practically throwing me around, jiggling my stomach. I mewed and cried for my mother.

Finally I was set down next to a warm familiar body. I cuddled next to get as best as I could and fought for sleep. My other heads weren't tired and protested when I laid down. Thankfully I had the legs. They bit my ears and nipped my nose, begging me to rise, but I stayed, focused on sleep. Finally they have up and slept with me.

When we woke up, we woke up together. In a mass, waking each other up, like excited atoms becoming hot. I rose sleepily and a warm tongue surrounded me in love. It cleaned my soft fur and I purred.

I cuddled with mom. I want to stay like this forever.

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~A Few Years Later~

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Cuddled up with mom. I nipped her ear and played around.

Cold clammy fingers clamped around my middle, I shrieked and Simon bit the hand with his fangs and puffed a breath of smoke.

The hand dropped me, and I scurried away. I saw a perfect spot to hide. I slid under the heavy filing cabinet, only to have it slowly moved. Before I could run, fingers grabbed my scruff.

I watched as my mother looked smaller and smaller and she eventually dissapeared down the long hallway. I was shoved is a dark box and was taken blindly away from my mother.

In the box, I faintly remembered seeing my father. Only barely, but enough to see the snarl on his face seeing me through the glass.

I said this alone, while my heads stared at me in awe, "I will never be my father."

Chapter 4 by WaffleWarrior



I proudly said those words.

Simon shook his head and flapped his wings. "But don't you want to be strong like him?"

"Yes, but he uses it for his bloodthirsty thoughts. He's evil."

Graham nodded his head. "He's hateful now. All of his heads are." His horns had grown overnight. Getting bigger every week a least.

Simon sighed. "I wish mother could show us what path is right. Henry, I agree."

Graham spoke suddenly. "I vow never to be my father."

Simon nodded. "I vow, too."

I smiled. "Me too."

The box started to open and I could see around me. It was obviously a fake biome. I like my mother's, but it seemed cleaner and better kept. I decide to climb up and lay on a heated rock.

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Then I fall asleep.

Chapter 5 by Shadestorm



Waking up, I notice the fabricated sky is sinking into twilight. Hunting time. I glance toward the glass. As usual, there is a surplus of humans. They love to watch me.

"Hey, look," Graham says, "We have our usual group of admirers." He finds the attention gratifying. He thinks we are famous.

"How funny. I guess they are drawn to higher beings," Simon decides, "Hint hint, us." He finds it amusing.

I find it annoying.

"Shall we go find something?" I say.

"Yes," Graham looks at me, "What shall we do with it?"

"Break its neck! Break its neck!" Simon would be jumping up and down if he could.

"No," I say, "That's horrible. Also, we did it the night before last."

"How about... burning it to a crisp?" Simon provides another option.

"Yes!" Graham readily agrees. "Can we?"

When it all comes down to it, I'm in charge. I have the legs.

"Oh, sure. Go ahead." I stand up and stretch halfway when the glass seems to flicker. Pausing mid-stretch, I look at the humans. All of them have small rectangles in there hands and small lights are flashing from each one.

"Let's go already," Simon tells me, shielding his head with the wings, "They're cute...when they aren't doing this."

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I finish the stretch and head into the hallway. "We need to escape sometime, guys." When they ask me what I mean,

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"They will kill us just like they killed father, even if we aren't anything like him."

Chapter 6 by Old Toady



My prediction comes true, but it isn't quite as I said. To the humans, we do become like him. We become big and loud and angry for reasons we could never have foreseen.

Fighting the zookeepers has become second nature to us, an urge so strong we hardly notice it as a conscious decision. If we don't fight, they'll sedate us, and if they sedate us we have to go into the empty sleep. We hate the empty sleep, but it's unavoidable.

Graham can't do much as a goat, but he cheers us on as I run. There isn't much space in our biome, but it's enough for me to dodge. Simon is the only one of us that actively fights. He snaps his jaw and beats his wings, so much broader than they were when we were small. His fangs have come in as well, sharp and long like the knives I saw in the room.

I haven't told either of them about the room yet. It was during a checkup that we were wheeled in, so our eyes had been drooping with sedatives and our brains had been slow. I can't be sure of what I saw before blacking out, but I am sure that I heard the man, the first man. The one from our birth. His voice was loud and clear in the silence of the sterile room.

"This is ridiculous. He isn't something that can be thrown into a petting zoo. He's dangerous."

"And that's why we're doing the surgery, Dr. Carlton. He'll be much more docile once the mating instinct is gone."

"Do you know how hard I worked on this project? How many late nights I spent agonizing over the possibility of a captive birth? And now that I've achieved it, you want to take away the possibility of a second generation."

"I'm not asking your permission."

"What about the private investors, then? How do you think they'll feel when--"

"When they realize we've been sitting on an unused gold mine? Quite annoyed, I'd wager. Now, you can help with the process or..."

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The blackness took over. I knew that I never want to feel as helpless as I did listening again to Graham and Simon talk about running for sport, to put

on a bit of a show for the humans before being carted away. They think we are running in a circle both from and toward an inevitable outcome.

I'm running because I fear what will happen next.

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